

April 8, 1964

Mr. Lester Bernstein,
Senior Editor,
Newsweek,
444 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York 10022.

Dear Mr. Bernstein:

Your thoughtful and friendly letter, which was transmitted to me by Mrs. Katharine Graham, deserved a more prompt acknowledgement and it would have been forthcoming except for the pressure of the double duty I have undertaken. I do want you to know, however, that in spite of my tardiness in that respect your words were both considered and honored.

You were as right as any one could be, and I promptly changed my relationship with the press which has been a delicate one at best. The Commission was really between the devil and the deep blue sea. We desired no publicity whatsoever, but for a time the pressure was almost hysterical. We decided not to have a public information officer because his work would be to make news rather than to avoid it. When we refused to answer questions, stories based on conjectures arising from the refusals were written to the distress of the Commission.

I tried to pursue a midway course, but found it did not work. As you pointed out, I was quoted as saying that some of the testimony would not be released in our lifetime. I assure you that nothing is further from our desires or intentions. From the very beginning, we have planned our work so that everything will be preserved for the public, and it is my hope that whatever comes under our review will be placed in the National Archives for all to see. Recently, so far as I have observed, I have not been quoted. That has been occasioned by my refusal to answer any questions concerning the testimony. This is as it should be, and I thank you for your cautioning words.